(b) what is the current status of this project and whether Government are aware that Lahore TV tower has been strengthened several times since then?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) Scheme for Upgradation of 10 KW HPT at Amritsar to a 20 KW HPT with 300 M tower at a new site was approved in October, 1999, for expansion of DD coverage in the border areas of Punjab.

(b) Due to delay in availability of the new site and pending construction of 300 M tower at this site, 20 KW HPT was commissioned at the old site with antenna on the existing 100 M tower in May, 2002. Construction of transmitter building at new site has since been completed. Foundation work of 300 M tower has also been completed and erection of tower is to commence. As per present indications, 300 M tower is expected to be completed and commissioned during 2008. Government has no information about strengthening of TV tower several times at Lahore.

Scam in sale of UNI shares to ZEE Telefilms

3753. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received request to order an inquiry into the big scam relating to sale of UNI shares to ZEE Telefilms;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon; and

(c) the present position thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) to (c) United News of India (UNI) is a media company registered under the Companies Act, 1956. Its affairs are governed by the shareholders through their representatives on the Board of Directors. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting exercises no control over it.

Transmission of Punjabi programmes

3754. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been growing demand for relay and transmission of Punjabi programmes;

(b) if so, the steps Government have taken or propose to take to telecast Punjabi serials on national channels, instead of regional channels; and

(c) how many Punjabi programmes/serials have been shown on DDI-I during the last one year with names of such serials/programmes?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Prasar Bharati have informed that all Regional Language Programmes are being telecast in the Regional Channels only and Regional Language Punjabi Satellite Channel signal is available throughout the country.

(c) Does not arise.

Range of VLPT in hilly and rural areas

3755. SHRI BASHISTHA NARAIN SINGH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) what is the coverage range of VLPT in hilly and rural areas;

(b) whether it is a fact that an amount of Rs. 81.6 lakh was spent for instalation of VLPT in Chirgaon Tehsil in Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh;

(c) whether it is also a fact that due to negligence of officials of Doordarshan Kendra, Shimla it has not been installed at a proper site, and hence does not cover maximum areas; and

(d) whether any action will be initiated against the officials responsible for wastage of public money since installation of VLPT is not serving any purpose?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) Normal coverage range of a VLPT in plains, where clear line of sight is available, is about 5-6 Kms. In hilly areas, the coverage gets limited due to obstruction to the signal caused by terrain conditions.

(b) VLPT project at Chirgaon was sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 81.6 lakhs. Expenditure incurred on the project is Rs. 63.97 lakhs.

(c) The present site, where VLPT, Chirgaon is located, was selected